

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A purification method that comprises subjecting a sample ~~containing~~ enriched for minicells to a condition that induces parent bacterial cells to adopt a filamentous form[,] and then filtering said sample, ~~whereby yielding a purified composition of~~ minicells ~~are separated from parent bacterial cells.~~

10. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein said condition is ~~an abnormal~~ a stress-inducing osmotic condition, ~~an~~ anaerobic condition, or a nutrient limiting condition.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein said sample is incubated in a hypertonic medium.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step is a dead-end filtration with a filter employing a pore size of about 0.45 μm .

13-25. (Canceled)

26. (New) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step employs a filter having a pore size small enough to allow minicells to pass through the pores, but not filamentous parent bacterial cells.

27. (New) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step comprises cross-flow filtration.

28. (New) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step comprises a serial filtration process that combines cross-flow filtration and dead-end filtration.

29. (New) A method according to claim 28, wherein the filtering step employs at least one filter employing a pore size less than or equal to about 0.2 μm .

30. (New) A method according to claim 28, wherein the filtering step employs at least one filter employing a pore size greater than or equal to about 0.45 μm .

31. (New) A method according to claim 28, wherein said serial filtration process is preceded by differential centrifugation.

32. (New) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step employs at least one filter employing a pore size less than or equal to about 0.2 μm .

33. (New) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step employs at least one filter employing a pore size greater than or equal to about 0.45 μm .

34. (New) A method according to claim 9, further comprising a step of subjecting the minicells to density gradient centrifugation in a biologically compatible medium.

35. (New) A method according to claim 34, further comprising a step of subjecting the minicells to differential centrifugation.

36. (New) A method according to claim 34, wherein said medium is isotonic and non-toxic.

37. (New) A method according to claim 34, wherein said medium consists essentially of iodixanol and water.

38. (New) A method according to claim 9, further comprising a step of treating said purified composition of minicells with an antibiotic.

39. (New) A method according to claim 9, further comprising a step of removing free endotoxin from said purified composition of minicells.

40. (New) A method according to claim 39, wherein said step of removing free endotoxin employs anti-Lipid A antibodies.